

REP. BECERRA: "FIRST STEP TOWARDS MAKING THE HARD CHOICES"

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform voted on its final report to the President. After the vote, Congressman Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus and a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee, released the following statement:

“The report issued by the Chairmen of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform is the first step towards making the hard choices to clean up our fiscal mess and create an economic strategy that will put America back on track. I thank our Co-Chairmen Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson for accepting the task of leading this Commission, and commend them each for advancing the debate on this important issue.

Several of the Chairmen’s proposals, including zero-based budgeting and reforming tax earmarks, deserve to be considered in the next Congress. Their report makes clear that there are many ways to deal with our need for fiscal reform. And the Chairmen were willing to put on the table several ‘sacred cows’ which should be the subject of review.

Unfortunately, I do not believe this report significantly targeted for reform the principal drivers of our economic crisis. We must face up to the decisions of the past which contributed mightily to our current debt and deficits. We sent our troops to war and never paid for it. We passed an unfunded Medicare prescription drug benefit for our seniors and never paid for it. And we cut taxes for the wealthy during a recession and in time of war and never paid for it. We shouldn’t now pay for these fiscal transgressions by slashing funding for our children’s classrooms and programs at senior citizen centers.

After carefully reviewing the Chairmen’s final report, I have concluded that I cannot support it. But our work can continue because Chairmen Bowles and Simpson have laid before us all many of the elements that, combined with common sense, can lead us to a sound solution to our deep fiscal troubles.”